

Message Text

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SUBJECT: RECENT OBSTACLES IN US-SOVIET CONSULAR AREA

1. SUMMARY: IN PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THERE HAS EMERGED PATTERN OF INTENSIFIED MONITORING AND HARASSMENT OF SOVIET CITIZENS WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH AMCIT TOURIST OR CONSULAR OFFICERS ON EMIGRATION OR OTHER CONSULAR BUSINESS. JUDGING FROM SEVERAL RECENT INCIDENTS, SOVIET SECURITY HAS RECENTLY BECOME LESS TOLERANT OF SUCH CONTACTS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AT LEAST FOUR AREAS OF TRADITIONAL CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITY (EMIGRATION, PROTECTION OF AMCITS, US-SOVIET MARRIAGES, ACCESS TO EMBASSY) EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICERS HAVE RECENTLY NOTICED APPARENTLY INTENSIFIED SOVIET SECURITY MONITORING OF AMCIT-SOVIET CITIZEN CONTACTS. IN SOME CASES PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN BECAUSE OF OVERT KGB HARASSMENT OF SOVIETS SEEKING CONSULAR ADVICE OR ASSISTANCE. IN OTHER CASES AMERICAN TRAVELERS HAVE BEEN THE TARGET OF CLOSER SURVEILLANCE, AND A NUMBER OF POTENTIALLY SERIOUS INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED. IN
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ALL CASES THERE SEEM TO BE COMPLICATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS

WHICH WERE NOT IN EVIDENCE AS RECENTLY AS THREE MONTHS AGO. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO RENDER MORE DIFFICULT SOVIET/AMCIT OR CONSOFF CONTACTS, BITS AND PIECES OF EVIDENCE IN PAST TWO MONTHS SEEM TO POINT TO THAT CONCLUSION.

3. EMIGRATION CASES - EMBASSY HAS KEPT DEPARTMENT INFORMED OF RECENT INSTANCES IN WHICH SOVIET CITIZENS SEEKING TO EMIGRATE TO CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS IN US HAVE BEEN INTERROGATED BY SOVIET SECURITY REPRESENTATIVES AND WARNED AGAINST DISCUSSING THEIR CASES WITH US CONSULAR OFFICERS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE HAS BEEN AN APPARENT STEP-UP IN REFUSALS OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS IN LONG-STANDING EXIT VISA CASES IN WHICH THE USG HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED AN OFFICIAL INTEREST. RECENTLY RENEWED EXIT REFUSAL CASES INCLUDE FOUR US-BORN AMERICAN CITIZENS LONG SEEKING REPATRIATION AND SOME 25 OTHER DIVIDED US-SOVIET FAMILY CASES WHICH HAVE BEEN INCLUDED ON THE LAST SEVERAL USG REPRESENTATION LISTS (MOSCOW 7069 AND PREVIOUS).

4. PROTECTION OF AMCITS - SEVERAL AMERICAN TOURISTS IN RECENT WEEKS MAY HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO THE INTENSIFIED MONITORING OF CONTACTS BETWEEN SOVIET JEWS PURSUING EXIT VISA APPLICATIONS AND FOREIGNERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TEN TOURISTS FROM MIAMI WHOSE PICNIC WITH SOVIET JEWS WAS DISRUPTED MAY 10 BY THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES WERE EVIDENTLY SUBJECTED TO CLOSE SURVEILLANCE FROM THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE SOVIET UNION (MOSCOW 6996 AND PREVIOUS). THE YOUNG AMERICAN FROM WHOM DOCUMENTS AND FILM WERE "STOLEN" APRIL 15 IN SUKHUMI (DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY RUSSIAN JEWS IN GEORGIA LONG DENIED EXIT PERMISSION) MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP BY HEIGHTENED KGB SENSITIVITY TO SUCH CONTACTS (MOSCOW 5701). RUMORS ALSO PERSIST THAT CELEBRATION OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ANNIVERSARY IN MOSCOW WAS POSTPONED LARGELY BECAUSE OF SOVIET FEAR THAT VISITING FOREIGN SCIENTISTS WOULD MAKE CONTACT WITH JEWISH COUNTERPARTS HERE LONG DENIED EXIT PERMISSION.

5. ACCESS TO EMBASSY:- ALTHOUGH ACCESS TO THE EMBASSY HAS LONG BEEN A DIFFICULT PROBLEM DUE TO THE TIGHT BLOCKING AND SCREENING PROCEDURES USED BY THE SOVIET "MILITIAMEN" POSTED OUTSIDE, PERIODIC EMBASSY PROTESTS TO THE MFA PREVIOUSLY

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APPEARED TO HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT IN FACILITATING ACCESS AT LEAST FOR PERSONS WITH WRITTEN INVITATIONS FROM CONSULAR OFFICERS TO DISCUSS CITIZENSHIP, FAMILY REUNIFICATION OR OTHER CONSULAR MATTERS. PROTESTS LODGED AT THE PROTOCOL AND USA DIVISIONS OF THE MFA IN LATE DECEMBER (MOSCOW 15924), FOR EXAMPLE, LED TO SOME MODIFICATION IN THE MILITIA'S BEHAVIOR DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, FOR WHICH MINISTRY OFFICIALS DID NOT HESITATE TO TAKE CREDIT (MOSCOW 1101). BEGINNING

IN EARLY MARCH, HOWEVER, THE MILITIA BEGAN ONCE AGAIN TO DENY ENTRY EVEN TO PERSONS WITH SUCH INVITATIONS IN HAND AND, IN SEVERAL CASES TO DETAIN THEM IN THE LARGE MILITIA SHACK CONSTRUCTED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO ON THE CORNER NEAR THE EMBASSY, WHERE THEY WERE INTERROGATED FOR AS MUCH AS THREE HOURS AND WARNED AGAINST CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY (MOSCOW -162 5407, 3539). IN SEVERAL INCIDENTS WITNESSED BY RESIDENT AND VISITING AMERICANS, THE MILITIAMEN ALSO EMPLOYED CONSIDERABLE FORCE TO PREVENT SOVIET CITIZENS (AND IN AT LEAST ONE CASE, AN AMERICAN) FROM ENTERING THE EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH ON APRIL 1 THE AMBASSADOR PROTESTED TO THE MFA THIS INTERFERENCE WITH ACCESS TO THE EMBASSY (MOSCOW 4730) AND CONSOFFS MADE SEVERAL FOLLOW-UP REPRESENTATIONS, THE MINISTRY APPARENTLY HAS BEEN UNWILLING OR UNABLE THIS TIME TO MODIFY THE MILITIA'S INSTRUCTIONS.

5. SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN HOSTILE TO MARRIAGES BETWEEN THEIR SUBJECTS AND FOREIGNERS. HOWEVER, THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SOME RECENT CASES SEEM TO HAVE GONE TO EXTRA LENGTHS TO FRUSTRATE OR DELAY SUCH MARRIAGES BETWEEN AMERICANS AND SOVIETS. A CASE IN POINT IS TANIA HAMMOND'S FOUR-MONTH EFFORT -- ABORTIVE TO DATE -- TO HAVE HER EXIT VISA APPLICATION ACCEPTED (MOSCOW 6181). TWO AMCITS IN MOSCOW, AND SEVERAL OTHERS IN YEREVAN, ARE CURRENTLY ENCOUNTERING HASSLES IN COORDINATING THEIR AUTHORIZED MARRIAGE DATES WITH THEIR AUTHORIZED PERIODS OF STAY IN THE SOVIET UNION. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY, A ZAGS OFFICE (YEREVAN) HAS OUTRIGHT REFUSED TO REGISTER A US-SOVIET MARRIAGE (MOSCOW 7721). THE KGB, WHICH HAS SIGNIFICANT INPUTS AT VARIOUS STAGES OF THE ALREADY COMPLEX MARRIAGE PROCESS, SEEMS CURRENTLY TO HAVE A RELATIVELY FREE HAND IN MANIPULATING THE PROCESS TO AMCITS' DISADVANTAGE.

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